

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Mindful Humility

On July 6 the Church honors Saint Sisoës the Great, known for his holy life and deep humility.

Born in Egypt, Sisoës was an admirer of Saint Anthony. After Anthony died, he went to live on the mountain Anthony had once inhabited, and worked for many years to fill his life with prayer, putting aside his own desires and working against temptations.

Like other great saints he was sought out, even in his relative isolation, by earnest Christians who wanted to benefit from his spiritual wisdom. Because his counsel was so highly valued, they wrote down some of his words, and so we have them today.

Sisoës always seems to have stressed two things in speaking with the people who came to him: first, sincere humility, and second, mindfulness, which means doing everything you do thoughtfully and with a clear intention.

One example of his counsel shows how he urged both these important things. A monk came to him, asking his advice about how to pray. Describing his prayer efforts he said, "Father, I always place myself in the presence of God."

Sisoës discerned that the man had a good intention, which was to come closer to God. But his answer was: "It would be much more to your advantage to place yourself below every creature, in order to be sincerely humble."

The saint's personal humility was an object of admiration and even awe. Sisoës rarely spoke, because he regarded silence as one aspect of humility—not placing importance on one's own words and ideas, and being ready to hear what God is saying. Being around him, people noted, was always a strong reminder of the shallowness and needlessness of much of our casual conversation.



July 6, 2014

4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Rom. 6:18-23
Gospel: Mt. 8:5-13
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

- SATURDAY, JULY 12**
5:30pm - Great Vespers
- SUNDAY, JULY 13**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy

Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, but we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Among them are:

Michael, Mary and Max Bakaletz, Genevieve Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

But another aspect of humility is self-criticism, and so this silent man said of himself: "I am now thirty years praying daily that my Lord Jesus may preserve me from saying an idle word, and yet I am always relapsing."

Sisoës died in about the year 429, with his monks around him. He had taught them well how to serve the Lord. With death approaching his face shown like the sun, the monks said, as he prepared to enter the Lord's presence.

On this same day we read Romans 6:18-23, which might be called an explanation of the way Sisoës believed life should be lived. Saint Paul tells the Romans that they are no longer slaves of sin, but now they are slaves of God. This "slavery" is similar to Sisoës' advice to become truly humble by mindfully, intentionally putting oneself below every creature.

When they were slaves of sin, Paul writes, the Romans were "free in regard to righteousness" or in other words did not have to obey God. But what did this freedom give them?

He answers his own question by saying that the end of that freedom is death. But by being mindfully humble and making oneself a slave of God, "the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life."



Announcements

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Church School Conference** for NJ Deanery is scheduled for Saturday, August 2. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Youth Day** at Six Flags Great Adventure is scheduled for Thursday, August 21, 2014. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ **Enjoy your vacation** but remember to visit the Orthodox Church at your destination. To search for a local parish go to <http://orthodoxyinamerica.org> and enter your location in the search panel. If you plan to receive Holy Communion, be sure that the priest knows who you are before the Divine Liturgy. It is always good form to approach the Chalice knowing that the priest is informed about you. Have a wonderful and safe summer!

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Kathy Cahayla**, who celebrates her birthday July 10, and **Peggy Kovalycsik**, July 11. May God grant both of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able.

While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross, receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and for fellowship in our Church Hall after the service.